Visconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

Wisconsin Organizations Report Receiving Fake Invoices

Release Date: April 16, 2012 Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007 Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

Editor's Note: A scan of a fake invoice received by a Wisconsin business is included on the second page of this .PDF file.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is asking business owners and city governments to be on the lookout for solicitations masked as invoices for telecommunications services.

Businesses and city government offices around the state have recently received \$425 invoices for a "telecom maintenance agreement" from a company in California, despite having made no purchases from the business. DATCP's Consumer Protection Bureau has received written complaints from the cities of Eau Claire and Racine and businesses in Waupun, Green Bay and Elkhorn of invoices received on March 28th and 29th. The Sheboygan Police Department also received this invoice, as did five additional businesses in that area.

The invoices are actually sales pitches for future services. Without questioning the validity of the document, businesses and agencies are at risk of paying for an expense that did not occur.

The Consumer Protection Bureau has sent the company an official warning concerning their violations of state and federal laws prohibiting solicitations disguised as bills. This deceptive practice is not exclusive to Wisconsin – the North Dakota Attorney General issued a cease and desist order against the same company in February, alleging that invoices for products that were never ordered or purchased are in violation of that state's consumer fraud laws.

If you have recently received an invoice for a "telecom maintenance agreement," be aware that it may be a solicitation. Make sure that your billing department knows if your organization has had any transactions with the sender before you consider making any payments.

If you received an invoice but did not make a purchase from the company, contact Consumer Protection to file a written complaint. Download a complaint form or file a complaint online at http://datcp.wi.gov. You can also call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-422-7128.

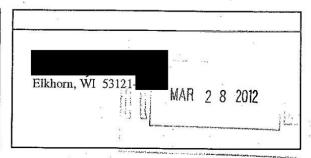
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Date	Reference #		
3/15/2012			



Web Site www.us-telecom.com		Thank you for your business, this warranty preventative maintenance on all telecom sy equipment, including, telephone instrume switches, routers, & cabling				stem	
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